

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM IN KANO STATE, NIGERIA: A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT LINKAGE

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Abstract: *The social protection system is an important agenda, not only for the well-being of the people but for the social, economic and political development of Kano State in particular and Nigeria in general. The paper focuses attention on the social protection initiatives of the Kano State government meant to provide a minimum standard of living for everyone and to reduce multidimensional poverty and inequality. In addition, they prevent shocks that are due to risks such as unemployment, destitution, sickness, illiteracy, and disability, which can push people into social exclusion and insufficiency. Four hypotheses and four research questions were formulated to guide the study. A total of 278 respondents was utilized for the study and stratified random sampling was used to select the respondents. In addition to that, five respondents were engaged in the interview and purposive sampling was used to select the interviewers. The instruments applied in the study are self-designed questionnaire tagged the Social Protection System Questionnaire (SPSQ) and the interview protocol. The questionnaire has a reliability coefficient of 0.82. The t-test at 0.05 level of significance was used in testing the null hypotheses. While thematic analyses were used for the interview. The findings of the study show that there is no significant difference between gender on the perception of the social protection system of the Kano State government. Also, there is no significant difference between poor and vulnerable people of the state on the acceptability of the social protection system. And there is no significant difference between the most vulnerable and deprived women and children on the effects of the social protection system. But the result revealed that there is a significant relationship between the social protection programmes of Kano State government and poverty. Based on the findings of the study the challenges, as well as the future prospects of the social protection programmes of Kano State government, were highlighted in order to attain sustainable development.*

Keywords: *Poverty, Vulnerability, Social Protection, Sustainable Development*

Introduction

The social protection is a policy, acknowledged worldwide that involve collective measures to provide a wide range of private and public initiatives, aims at delivering income to the poor, protect the vulnerable people against risks and invest in the capabilities and rights of those who are helpless and marginalized, to improve their socioeconomic chances and to reduce their susceptibility (Kalusopa et al, 2012). The social protection plays a fundamental role in creating more inclusive and sustainable development pathways. The social protection programmes tackle multiple dimensions of poverty and deprivation and serve as a powerful tool in the battle against poverty and inequality (Canagarajah & Sethuraman, 2001).

The social protection has successfully established itself as a core function of development policy of Nigeria in recent years, but in many respects; it remains firmly rooted in its origins in social safety nets and humanitarian relief, where assistance was provided on a 'discretionary' rather than an 'entitlement' basis, usually for a limited time, often in the form of food and medical supply (Umukoro, 2013). Despite the strong economic growth of Nigeria, the 54% of its population are living in poverty (Okoye & Onyukwu, 2007). In recent years, the government and its development partners have sought to develop the social protection instruments to tackle the country's high rates of poverty and vulnerability. This is part of a project funded by the UNICEF Nigeria to support both the federal and state governments in realizing their social protection strategies (Holmes et al, 2012).

The social protection system comprises of the federal government-led programmes such as conditional cash transfer programme (CCT), subsidised maternal and child health care provision (MCH) and the Community-based Health Insurance Scheme (CBHIS). Other social protection programmes are implemented in an adhoc manner, run by the ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) at state and local government level. These include child savings accounts, disability grants, health waivers, education support (e.g. free uniforms) and nutrition support. In addition to that, there are social protection programmes led by donor agencies, these include conditional cash transfer (CCT) for girls' education in some states, orphans and vulnerable children's (OVC) programmes, provision of nutrition, health and education support as well as programmes that consist of the social protection for the HIV/AIDS patients (example free issuance of anti-retroviral drugs, campaign against stigmatization) etc. (Umukoro, 2013).

However, The Kano State government is determined to improve the living standard of the poor and weak people in the state. As part of the government policy, the state government embarks up on the social protection programmes to foster social development, to address the impacts of social vulnerability and exclusion driven by poverty and to improve and protect human capital toward, labour market intervention, social assistance, employment generations and old-age income support.

The social protection programmes introduced comprises of a free education scheme for Kano State students of secondary and tertiary institutions, free feeding and free uniforms for primary school pupils, free payment of WAEC and NECO registration to Kano State students, free sponsorship scheme of Kano State indigenes to study at the local and foreign universities, free scholarship allowance, free girls-child initiative buses for the shuttling of girls' day secondary school students, free ante-natal and post-natal care for the vulnerable women in the rural and urban areas, "Lafiya Jari" programme (health is wealth programme). Others include free medical treatment at both state and local government hospitals, free treatment of irreparable VVF patients, free drugs of Tuberculosis (TB) and HIV/AIDS

victims, free feeding during Ramadan fasting, free ten thousand Naira working capital to the poor rural and urban women, free allowances to local Imams and their deputies, free empowerment scheme to the unemployed youths, free mass wedding of widows organized by the Hisbah board, proposed Kano State Contributory Health Insurance Scheme etc.

It is against this background that the paper will examine the previous and current government initiatives on the social protection, in order to address the impacts of social vulnerability and poverty among the teeming population of Kano State. Sadly, the social protection interventions in the state have been associated with many challenges. The paper will look into these challenges as well as the future prospects of the social protection system in Kano State as a means of achieving sustainable development.

Problem Statement

Kano State; as the most populous state in Nigeria experienced problems of the poor, the vulnerable women and children, the aged and the disabled. These problems range from undernourishment, dispossession, disease, destitution, illiteracy and inequality in terms of livelihood.

Certainly, the problems have reached a vital stage that family members, community and religious leaders, non-governmental organizations and government officials are worried about the conditions of these categories of people in the society. The extent of these problems necessitates the need for the Kano State government to implement the social protection programmes for the benefit of its teeming population. Therefore, the study is necessary in order to fill the existing gap in knowledge needed in social and community development planning.

Objectives

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To identify gender perception of the social protection system of Kano State government
- To analyse the social protection initiatives of the past and present Kano State governments.
- To examine the acceptability of the social protection system to the people of Kano State.
- To investigate the effects of the social protection system on the vulnerable and deprived people of Kano State.

Research Questions

The fundamental questions that require investigation are:

- What is the gender perception of the social protection system of Kano State government?
- What are the social protection initiatives of the past and present Kano State governments?
- How acceptable is a social protection system to the people of Kano State?
- What are the effects of the social protection system on the vulnerable and deprived people of Kano State?

Hypothesis

The four null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study as follows:

- H₀₁:** There is no significant difference between gender on the perception of the social protection system of Kano State government.

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between the social protection initiatives of Kano State government and poverty.

H0₃: There is no significant difference between poor and vulnerable people of Kano State on the acceptability of the social protection system.

H0₄: There is no significant difference between the most vulnerable and deprived women and children on the effects of the social protection system of Kano State government.

Methodology

The paper utilized mixed method of data collection as a research design. Therefore, the data was sourced through questionnaires which were administered to the poor and vulnerable people in some selected areas in Kano Metropolis. Similarly, the research was supplemented by a face to face interview with some poor and vulnerable people in the state. The questionnaires included both closed and open-ended questions. The close ended investigates were expressed in either “Yes or No” format while the open-ended questions allowed the respondents to freely express themselves by writing down what they feel about the social protection system of Kano State government. The researchers employed the service of the research assistants to help the uneducated respondents to answer the questionnaires. Similarly, the interview administered, gave the researchers the opportunity to have face to face discussions with the respondents and also ask follow-up questions that are not contained in the interview protocol.

The questionnaires and interview protocol are the instruments used for data collection. The questionnaire was developed by the researchers and tagged the Social Protection System Questionnaire (SPSQ). It was divided into two sections; the first section contains the demographic information of the respondents, while the second section contains questions that bother on the research topic. Equally, the interview protocol comprises of the demographic information of the respondents as well as the questions designed for the respondents on the social protection systems. Additionally, the interview conducted was semi-structured and was conducted with five respondents the researchers employ purposive sampling as a technique for selecting respondents for the interview in order to provide the desired information by knowing the minds, opinions, attitudes and feelings of the respondents. However, it is essential in a survey research to determine a sample size and deal with a non-response bias. Therefore, the common goal is to collect data representative of a population. The ideal population of the study consists of one thousand (1000) poor and vulnerable women, children, the aged and the disabled in some selected areas of Kurna, Rijiyar Lemo, Bachirawa and Kwanar Ungogo quarters of Kano municipality. The sample size for this research work are drawn from the ideal population and the research tolerate 5% margin error, thus 278 samples was used for the study based on the sample size determination of Krejcie and Morgan (1970). To ensure gender equality, one hundred and thirty-nine (139) respondents from both males and females were used to make a total of two hundred and seventy-eight (278) respondents. The stratified random sampling technique was used for the administration of the questionnaires and all the questionnaires were returned by the respondents. The instrument was validated by the experts in the area of measurement and evaluation to ensure content validity. Meanwhile the reliability of the instrument was based on the Cronbach Alpha which produced reliability co-efficient of 0.82. The result showed that the instrument was good enough to be used. The data collected from the respondent questionnaires were analysed using t-test analysis. While for the interview, the data collected were analysed using thematic analysis.

Literature Review

Traditional Social Protection in Nigeria

The social protection is an inherited custom within the African culture, with the traditional practice aimed to meet the needs and provide protection for the poor, the vulnerable and those at risk. Although not viewed as a structured organizational scheme, the social protection has existed in African communities as a norm. In Nigeria, the social protection has been implemented by heads of households and traditional rulers who have accepted a leadership role in the community. These community leaders have routinely accepted the responsibility of providing collective protection for the vulnerable, ensuring that community members at risk are provided for and protected from the increased risk. The extended family system has also supported this process, fulfilling the critical role of cushioning the impact of poverty in the context of widowhood and for children deprived of a parent (e.g. Orphans) (Olaore, 2016).

Indigenous social care practice persisted as a prominent means of social protection within the Nigerian community setting; a group such as the Salvation Army and the Green Triangle Club emerged as pioneers of modern social work in Nigeria (Kazeem, 2011). The primary attentions of these non-governmental organizations were delinquency problems among youths. The efforts resulted in the establishment of industrial schools, and the organization of boys' and girls' clubs (Atolagbe, 1989; Kazeem, 2011). During the late 1940s, the colonial government exhibited an interest in organized social work, with the appointment of Mr. Donald Faulkner as the first social welfare officer (Ortiz (2001).

In addition to the presence of social work as an emerging profession within the community, socioeconomic instabilities impacted the provision of indigenous social care practices. The impetuses for such instabilities were numerous changes, which erupted on a macro level. These changes emerged as the result of population growth, urbanization, globalization, climate change, socio-political unrest, wars and their aftermath. With the growing need and desire for evidence based social protection programmes, the technological advancements manifested as a challenge to the traditional social protection measures, overwhelming and disorganizing facilitators of indigenous social care practices (Akinola, 2014).

Modern Social Protection in Nigeria

Despite the presence of social work practice and its commitment to social care, the effective development and implementation of the social protection initiatives have persisted as a challenge in Nigeria. For example, Sanubi (2011) assessed that the social protection is not only a strange concept for the ordinary Nigerian, but it is also not recognized as a right to be obtained from the government as a result of citizenship. Poverty, economic vulnerability, and inequality are frequently viewed as a result of destiny rather than the result of economic policies or hostile conditions. Simultaneously, in lieu of social programmes provided by the government, citizens of developing countries, such as Nigeria, for instance believe that it is their moral obligation to give alms to the poor (Ogunkan, 2011; Uche & Ogugua, 2013). This perspective has impacted public actions driven by government policies. Those who develop policies and programmes view "the social protection initiatives more as an altruistic move by the government than a furtherance of a well-deserved social contract in a democracy". Subsequently, in a seemingly democratic political entity as Nigeria, the social protection programmes (and especially social assistance and welfare services) have been particularly inadequate as a greater proportion of the population remains trapped, suffering as a result of economic and social vulnerabilities (Ginneken 1999).

The two forms of contemporary social protection initiatives are currently implemented in Nigeria by the donor agencies such as USAID, DFID, UNICEF, WHO etc. They are “In Care of the People Cash Transfer Programme (COPE CCT)” and the “Family Nutritional Support Program (FNSP)”. These programmes were initiated to address the needs of various groups within Nigeria who have been recognized as vulnerable and economically dependent. These groups include families impacted by extreme poverty, orphan and vulnerable children (OVC) and those suffering with HIV/AIDS (Olaore, 2016).

Theoretical Approach

The Transformative Approach to Social Protection

This approach is linked to the work of Stephen Devereux and Rachel Sabates-Wheeler. In their work, they recognize the need for the social protection against livelihood risks and they also admit that social equity must be the guideline for their implementation. Devereux and Wheeler criticize the World Bank’s concept of the social protection paradigm of “safety nets” to confront livelihood risks, what the World Bank named Social Risk Management (SRM). They affirmed that “safety nets” are mechanisms for smoothing consumption, due to declining or fluctuating incomes. If the social protection is conceived in this sense according to Devereux and Wheeler, the social protection would represent a narrow response to livelihood shocks, because in their view the range of interventions that can contribute to the provision of the social protection is much broader than resource transfers, though they acknowledged the importance of resource transfers, because they regard it as a very important case; for vulnerable groups, they cannot survive on their own resources. These income transfers specifically provide “economic protection” in response to economic risks and livelihood susceptibility. (Devereux & Wheelers 2004: 9).

The Right-Based Approach to Social Protection

The rights-based approach to social protection is connected to the initiative of the UK Department for International Development (DFID). The rights-based approach offers normative standards, analytical tools and operational guidance to the social protection measures. It considers the social protection to be a right and entitlement and not just a matter of charity. Therefore, citizens are encouraged to claim their social protection entitlements and places clear obligations on the governments to guarantee social protection. In addition to that, the right-based approach uses a range of international human rights standards and principles to justify social protection, starting with those related to social security and influence the design of schemes (e.g. equality and non-discrimination, participation and accountability). The right-based approach also highlights the core obligations and the minimum standards that can be expected, as well as the specific requirements of vulnerable groups (United Nations, 2000).

Similarly, as part of contribution to the social protection policies, the right-based approach supports the realization of human rights for the poorest and most vulnerable in the society. This is particularly the case when the range of the social protection instruments (e.g. insurance schemes, public works, food aid, targeted cash transfers or social funds) are seen not based on humanitarian concerns or charity, but grounded in social justice, equal rights and entitlements of those that benefit from social protection. From this perspective, both approaches can be seen as complementary and mutually reinforcing (Conway and Norton, 2002).

Results

The results of the study are based on the data collected from the questionnaires and interview protocol. The demographic profiles of respondents are as follows:

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
10 –19 years	46	17
20 - 29 years	57	21
30 - 39 years	12	04
40 – 49 years	33	12
50 – 59 years	89	32
60 – 69 years	41	14
Total	278	100

Table 1 showed that out of two hundred and seventy eight (278) respondents, 46 (17%) of them are aged between 10 to 19 years-old and 57 (21%) respondents belong to the age group of 20 to 29 years-old, while 12 (4%) respondents belong to the age group of 30 to 39 years and 33 (12%) respondents belong to the age group of 40 to 49 years, 89 (32%) respondents belong to the age group of 50 to 59. The remaining 41 (14%) respondents belong to the age group of 60 to 69 years-old. Therefore, the majority of the respondents are between the ages of 50 to 59 years-old. This indicates that majority of the respondents are aged and the disabled individuals who require social protection due to their experience of high poverty, destitution and undernourishment in the society.

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	139	50
Female	139	50
Total	278	100

Table 2 indicates that of the twenty (278) respondents, 139 (50%) of them are male and 139 (50%) of the remaining are female. This show an equal representation of respondents among males and female among the vulnerable members of the society.

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Quranic Education	87	31
Primary Education	11	04
Uneducated	180	65
Total	278	100

The educational level of the respondents in Table 3 above shown that 87 (31%) respondents acquired Quranic education and 11 (4%) respondents obtain primary education. While 180 (65%) respondents are uneducated. This shows that the majority of respondents are not educated.

However, the four null hypotheses were tested using the t-test analysis below:

Hypothesis 1 (H₀₁): There is no significant difference between gender on the perception of the social protection system of Kano State government.

Table 4: Showing The T-Test Analysis Between Gender on The Perception of The Social Protection System.

Variables	N	X	SD	DF	t.cal.	t.crit.	Decision
Males	139	1.92	0.97	76	0.117	0.218	Not Significant
Females	139	1.90	0.96				

The result in table 4 above indicates that the calculated t-test value of 0.117 is less than the critical t-test value of 0.218 at 0.05 level of confidence. This implies that the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between gender on the perception of the social protection system of Kano State government, is retained.

Hypothesis 2 (H₀₂): There is no significant relationship between the social protection initiatives of Kano State government and poverty.

Table 5: Showing The T-Test Analysis Between the Social Protection Initiatives and Poverty

Variables	N	X	SD	DF	t.cal.	t.crit.	Decision
The social protection Initiatives	192	2.63	1.17	276	6.034	0.136	Significant
Poverty	86	1.80	0.72				

The data in table 5 above indicated that the calculated t-test value of 6.034 is greater than the critical t-test value of 0.136 at 0.05 level of confidence. This implies that the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between the social protection initiatives of Kano State government and poverty, is rejected.

Hypothesis 3 (H₀₃): There is no significant difference between poor and vulnerable people of Kano State on the acceptability of the social protection system.

Table 6: Showing The T-Test Analysis Between Poor and Vulnerable People on The Acceptability of The Social Protection System

Variables	N	X	SD	DF	t.cal.	t.crit.	Decision
Poor	176	2.78	1.22	276	0.148	0.843	Not Significant
Vulnerable People	102	2.66	1.18				

The result in table 6 above shows that the calculated t-test value of 0.148 is less than the critical t-test value of 0.843 at 0.05 level of confidence. This implies that the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between poor and vulnerable people of Kano State on the acceptability of the social protection system, is accepted.

Hypothesis 4 (H04): There is no significant difference between the most vulnerable and deprived women and children on the effects of the social protection system of Kano State government.

Table 7: Showing The T-Test Analysis Between the Most Vulnerable and Deprived Women and Children on The Effects of The Social Protection System

Variables	N	X	SD	DF	t.cal.	t.crit.	Decision
Most Vulnerable	169	2.45	1.13	276	0.137	1.032	Not Significant
Deprived Women and Children	109	2.31	1.09				

The result in table 7 above shows that the calculated t-test value of 0.137 is less than the critical t-test value of 1.032 at 0.05 level of confidence. This implies that the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between the most vulnerable and deprived women and children on the effects of the social protection system of Kano State government, is retained.

In addition to that, the results of the interview gathered were presented and analysed. The views of the respondents were examined based on the following subheadings:

The Acceptability of The Social Protection System

The respondents gave their opinions on the acceptability of the social protection system. The themes that emerged from the respondent's explanation includes: very supportive, wonderful and exciting, empathetic and lifesaving. Respondent One (R1) mentions that the social protection programmes of Kano State government are very supportive of the poor and vulnerable people of the state. He further stated that:

'This programme is very supportive, because the government takes care of my children's financial needs, especially on education at a time of my incapacitation. For instance, I have five children and three are schooling now, the eldest son among them is a student of Sa'adatu Rimi College of Education, Kumbotso and the government paid his entire tuition fee during the previous administration; which I am very happy. While the second child is a final year secondary school student, and fortunately, the government paid his WAEC and NECO exam fee. Besides, the other child is in primary school and government takes care of his feeding, uniform and writing materials; though, is not enough, but is a good attempt to assist the poor.'

While respondent Two (R2) explains that the social protection programmes of Kano State government are wonderful and exciting. She added that:

'These kinds of programmes are welcome development, because they improved the living standard of the people especially women and children. Last year the state government gave me free ten thousand

Naira as a capital to start a business. I am very happy and excited; I never had that kind of money before, since the death of my husband. With the money I started a petty business to take care of my children who are orphans. Thanks to Almighty Allah, thanks to Kano State government’.

Similarly, Respondent Three (R3) narrates that the social protection programmes were empathetic and life-saving. He added that:

‘The economic hardship in the country affects everybody, including the unemployed youths, the aged and the disabled. That is why beggars are trooping to our major street to beg for alms. With the initiatives of the Kano state government, some youths were empowered which prevent them from involving in deviant behaviours. Likewise, the empathetic and life-saving programmes of the state government lead to free feeding during the month of Ramadan. I want this programme to continue not only in the month of Ramadan, because people are now in need of money and foods’.

The Effects of The Social Protection System on The Vulnerable and Deprived People

The respondents gave their opinions on the effects of the social protection system. The themes that emerged from the respondents clarification on the effects of social protection comprises of: improve the living standard of the people, create comprehensive social development and prevent people against risk. Therefore, respondent four (R4) narrates that the social protection programmes of the government improve the living standard of the people. He continues that:

‘The free education programme of Kano State government helps our youths to improve their living standard. Many students now have the opportunity to study up to the university level, because the government sponsored their education through scholarship allowances, tuition waiver, payment of examination registration and free sponsorship scheme to study abroad. This in fact led to a comprehensive social development of the youths as leaders of tomorrow’.

Similarly, respondent five (R5) opined that the social protection programmes of the government prevent people against risk. She further stated that:

‘The “Lafiya Jari” programme (health is wealth programme) of the previous administration empowered the health practitioners to stand on their own, provide drugs at subsidized rate, save life and reduced maternal and infant mortality especially in the rural areas. This is a government initiative that tackles numerous dimensions of poverty and risks of the helpless and weak people in our society’.

Discussions

One of the findings of this study is that there was no significant difference between gender on the perception of the social protection system of Kano State government. The result supports the assertion of Morgan & Yablonski, (2011) who opined that the social protection is perceived by all individuals as a programme that assist people who are poor to get out of poverty, providing income support to the poorest, especially the sick, and retirees; increase enrolment and attendance rates of students in public schools’ address short-term employment

needs by developing skills and competencies; and reduction of the damages to properties arising from natural and man-made disasters.

Another finding of this study revealed that there was a significant relationship between the social protection initiatives of Kano State government and poverty. This coincides with the findings of Holzmann and Jorgensen (1999) which revealed the social protection system are related to the public actions taken in response to levels of poverty, vulnerability, risk and deprivation which are deemed socially unacceptable within a given polity or society. The findings also agree with Adesina (2012) who believed that several poverty indicators of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) show the poverty profile of Nigeria, which emphasized the need to reduce the poverty rate of the populace from 65% to 50% by the year 2018 through a comprehensive social protection strategy to safeguard the poor and vulnerable against the risks of destitution.

Furthermore, the third findings of the study indicated that there was no significant difference between poor and vulnerable people of Kano State on the acceptability of the social protection system. This is similar to the findings of Giovannetti et al, (2011) which stated that the social protection system can be more acceptable to both rural and urban dwellers, when the programme focus on social assistance for the poor and social insurance for the vulnerable. These two categories of the programmes are comparable and related.

The last findings of the study show that there was no significant difference between the most vulnerable and deprived women and children on the effects of the social protection system of Kano State government. This is in line with the findings of Holmes et al, (2012) which discovered that the effects of the social protection are preventing shocks that are due to risks such as sickness, unemployment or old age, which can push people into poverty. The findings also support the declaration of Kalusopa & Osei-Boateng (2013) which mention that the social protection has great impacts on the life of the poor and the vulnerable by embracing both social security and social welfare policies and measures such as social assistance for the elderly, support for women, children and the disabled, as well as interventions aimed at empowering individuals or groups to earn income through employment or self-employment.

However, the findings of the study from the respondent's interview revealed that the social protection programmes of Kano State government are acceptable among the poor and the vulnerable women and children, but the programme is not enough and does not cover most of the highly populated areas of Kano Metropolis. Some respondents believe that, despite its deficiencies; most of the government social protection initiatives are helpful, stimulating and save the life of the generality of the population who are mostly the poor. This coincides with the findings of Barientos (2007) which explain that social protection holds both social welfare and social security measures to assist and intervene in empowering individuals or groups to save the life of the poor and vulnerable women and children.

Furthermore, the findings of the study also revealed that the social protection programmes of Kano State government change the condition of the poor and defenceless people of the State by improving their standard of living, produce inclusive social development and stop them from putting themselves into danger. This relates to the findings of Hagen-Zanker & Holmes (2012) which maintain that Social protection has great impact on the life of the disadvantaged individuals in the society. It intervenes by protecting the minimum subsistence levels in low-income households besides managing risk against possible danger in the short-term as well as tackling the sources of vulnerability in the long term to develop higher living

standard and yield comprehensive social development. But unfortunately, the social protection programmes of Kano State government experience greater challenges. Some of these challenges are stated below:

The Challenges of The Social Protection Programmes in Kano State

The inadequate coverage of the social protection programmes of Kano State government serves as one of the major challenges associated with the programmes. This is reflected in the small scale of the programmes run by the state government that reach only a small fraction of the poor. For example, only a few poor with connections benefited from the programmes such as free ten thousand Naira working capital, free ante-natal and post-natal care for vulnerable women in both rural and urban areas, free feeding during Ramadan fasting etc.

Most of the social protection initiatives of Kano State government are mere political agenda. The political office holders launched the programmes not with the genuine intention of tackling the problem of the poor and the vulnerable people in the state but used them as a tool in a political campaign to influence the popular vote of the masses during election.

Frequent policy changes and inconsistent implementation turn out to prevent continuous progress in the social protection programmes in the state. The majority of these programmes left behind by the previous governments are discontinued and abandoned by the succeeding government, no matter how good is the programme.

Despite getting monthly subvention from the federal government and internally generated revenues in the state, the previous and current state governments spend a considerably lower share on the social protection as compared to other states like Lagos, Rivers etc.

Severe budgetary allocation and governance problems in the state have also contributed to the failure of the social protection programmes. Most of the times funds budgeted to finance the programmes are diverted for other purposes, leaving the recipients with unfulfilled promises.

A crucial aspect of transformative social policy, such as the social protection programme in a state like Kano requires a state- community partnership in the process of setting the social policy agenda. Therefore, lack of involvement of the actual beneficiaries in the formulation and implementation of the social protection programmes that would have transformed the lives of people from quantity to quality had resulted in the total failure of the programmes.

The manifestations and problems associated with corruption in Nigeria, which also affect Kano State in particular; have various dimensions. The various dimensions of corruption are project substitutions, misrepresentation of project finances, diversion of government resources, conversion of public funds to private uses. Etc. In some cases, lack of accountability and transparency made the social protection programmes to serve as a channel for draining state government coffers,

Conclusion and Recommendations

The social protection is a system designed to protect individual men, women and children against the risks of impoverishment in situations of sickness, disability, injury, unemployment, old age, death of a family member, high cost of health and child care, general poverty and social exclusion. Nevertheless, there is the huge need for social protection in Kano State. The majority of its population lives in poverty, destitution and squalor. Most of

them are found in the rural areas. They are usually engaged in agricultural activities and many others in informal economic activities.

Traditionally, the Kano State indigenes do rely on a local social network for social protection. But today, the extended family support had been weakened due to harsh economic problems as a result of neo-liberal globalization and rapid urbanization rates, this situation left many women, children, the elderly and the disabled struggle for their survival. Even today, despite many years of relatively high economic growth in the country, the majority of the populace still lacks social protection, however; where the social protection schemes do exist, it does so only for a tiny fraction of the population working in the formal segment of the economy, including those employed in the public and private formal sectors.

Therefore, the Kano State government has a greater role to play in tackling the challenges of the social protection programmes in order to protect the poor and the vulnerable individuals, households and communities from the adverse effects of shocks and destitution. However, the paper made certain recommendations on how to improve and sustain the social protection programmes in Kano State with the aim of improving the life of its teeming population in order to achieve a sustainable development. The paper recommended as follows:

The Kano State government should increase access to equitable and quality health, education and social welfare services in order to build human capital; this will help in breaking the inter-generational transmission of poverty.

To uplift the living standard of the poor and the vulnerable, the state government should guarantee a minimum level of employment for the long-term unemployed and underemployed youths. This will serve as a basis for sustainable development in the state.

The social sector expenditure of Kano State government remains very low, concurrently; service delivery in the state remains a weak link in terms of the potential scale-up and expansion of social protection. To achieve a sustainable development, the state government should increase its spending on social sectors such as poverty alleviation, housing conditions, water supply and sanitation, education and medical care; that all play a vital contribution in human development.

There is the need to address the limited funding of the existing social protection initiatives in the state. Therefore, more resources need to be mobilized if the government wants to expand coverage of the social protection to tackle the high rates of poverty and vulnerability throughout the state.

By emphasizing on the social protection system, the Kano State government should encourage indigenes to invest in human and assets capital, so as to promote investment and growth among low income earners. This contributes to social inclusion, social cohesion and the stability of the state.

The Kano State government should develop an all-embracing social protection policy framework to provide clear institutional roles and responsibility which guides the social protection design and implementation at the state and local government levels.

The Kano State government should support and generate political commitment to social protection, which serve as a driving force to stimulate the management cycle to put more

emphasis toward the achievement of the programme. The political commitment in the state is very scarce and variable, leaving the poor and the vulnerable abandoned and left to their fate. Therefore, a broad-based political commitment to social protection needs to be built in the state to achieve a sustainable development.

The state government should strengthen linkages to child protection. The child protection should be integrated across sectors and agencies, in particular state ministries and local government bodies responsible for health, education, labour, justice and social welfare. The social protection programmes can play a stronger role in addressing child protection concerns through core social protection interventions (e.g. addressing youth unemployment through public works programmes) and linking more strategically to complementary programmes and services, such as community sensitization.

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